

**Year 2**  
**Direct Support Professional Training**

# **Resource Guide**



## **Session #5**

# **Positive Behavior Support: Understanding Behavior as Communication**

**Department of Education  
and the  
Regional Occupational Centers and Programs  
in partnership with the  
Department of Developmental Services**

**2000**

## List of Class Sessions

Session	Topic	Time
1	Introduction and Supporting Choice: Identifying Preferences	3 hours
2	Person-Centered Planning and Services	3 hours
3	Person-Centered Planning and Services	3 hours
4	Communication, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution	3 hours
5	<b>Positive Behavior Support: Understanding Behavior as Communication</b>	<b>3 hours</b>
6	Positive Behavior Support: Adapting Support Strategies to Ensure Success	3 hours
7	Teaching Strategies: Personalizing Skill Development	3 hours
8	Teaching Strategies: Ensuring Meaningful Life Skills	3 hours
9	Supporting Quality Life Transitions	3 hours
10	Wellness: Medication	3 hours
11	Wellness: Promoting Good Health	3 hours
12	Assessment	2 hours
<b>Total Class Sessions</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total Class Time</b>		<b>35 hours</b>

# Key Words

In this session, the key words are:

- Antecedent (Before)
- Consequence (After)
- A-B-C Data
- Behavior Triggers
- Behavior Function (what the behavior means)
- Replacement Behavior

## Information Brief

# Overview of Positive Behavior Support

## What We Have Learned (Review From Year 1)

**What** people are doing, **where**, and **with whom** they spend time have a lot to do with behavior.

**All behavior has a communicative purpose. All behavior is communication! Behavior doesn't just happen for no reason at all.** There are always reasons for challenging behaviors, even if we do not know what they are right now.

Our goal is to better UNDERSTAND the behavior and why it is happening. We can identify the reasons for challenging behavior by completing some of the simple assessment tools in this session.

Behaviors are strategies people use to get their needs met. Part of our job is to figure out how the challenging behaviors are “working” for the person so that we can teach them some socially appropriate alternatives (replacement behaviors).

One of the most important goals of positive behavior support is to teach replacement behaviors and skills as a positive alternative to challenging behaviors.

## Your Notes

## How to Support People Who Have Challenging Behaviors

- Identify and describe the behavior in observable and measurable terms (so that you know it when you see it, and so that you can record it when it happens).
- **Observe to find out when, where, with whom, and during which activities the behavior is most and least likely to happen.**
- Review current medical records and historical information to see if medical related issues, side effects of medications, health and diet may be effecting the behavior.
- Complete some assessment tools (like A-B-C data sheets, a Scatter Plot, or a Motivation Assessment Scale) to help find out why the behavior is happening.
- Look at Quality of Life issues that may be affecting the behavior. Things like the amount of choice, friendships and relationships, meaningful career and educational opportunities, meaningful activities, community involvement, etc., that a person has in his or her life.

## Your Notes

- State your hypothesis (or “best guess”) about why the behavior is happening, based on your assessment and data information.
- Identify and teach **replacement** behaviors, communication skills and other skills that will help the person get their wants and needs met in socially appropriate ways.
- Develop a plan to make sure that replacement behaviors and other appropriate behaviors are reinforced when they happen.
- Work together as a team to develop and implement positive supports that will assist with the persons quality of life and overall happiness.

## Your Notes

### The A-B-C's of Behavior

The term “A-B-C” refers to:

Antecedent – Behavior – Consequence

The relationship between these three things are important because it helps us to understand why a behavior happens. We can do a better job developing support strategies that work. We want to find patterns in both what happens before (antecedents) and after (consequences) behaviors over time. Patterns are things that happen over and over again on a regular basis. For example, when a DSP asks John to do his homework (antecedent), John will usually whine and cry (behavior). Then, staff will usually help him with his homework (consequence).

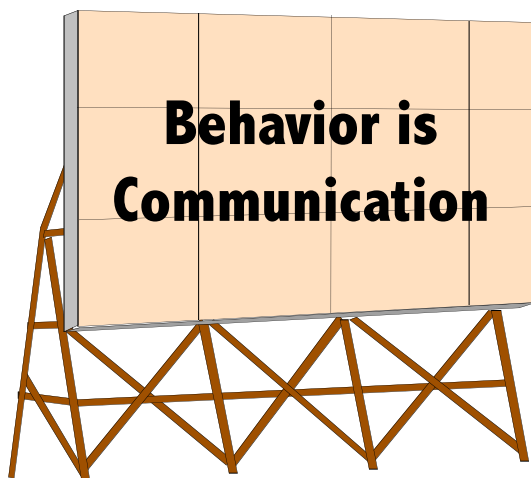
**Antecedents (A) include anything that happens just before the behavior.** This can include the day and time the behavior happened, what the person is doing, where the behavior occurred, who was around at the time, how hot, cold or noisy it was, etc.

**The Behavior (B) is what the person actually said or did.**

**Consequences (C) include what happens immediately after the behavior.** This can be things other people say or do, the avoidance of (not having to do) a task or activity, or something the person gets (like an object, food, an activity etc.).

It is important for us to pay attention to the “A-B-C’s” of behavior because they help us to understand the relationship between a person’s behavior and the antecedents and consequences. By paying attention to this relationship we can do a better job of understanding what a person’s behaviors are communicating.

## Your Notes



### Remember

All behaviors are being reinforced (or rewarded) in some way. This includes challenging behavior. The Consequence section (C) of your A-B-C data may show that a person's behavior is followed by avoiding a task or activity, getting a social interaction from someone, or getting food, drink, money or other tangible items. It is also important to know that some challenging behaviors are a result of the person being sick or ill, feeling pain (from a toothache, menstrual cramping, headaches, etc.), or sometimes even from the side effects of a medication they are taking.



### Your Notes



**When you don't find patterns in Antecedents or Consequences for a particular behavior, you probably need to do more observations to get more A-B-C data.**

The A-B-C data sheet should be one of the **first** tools that we pull out and use when we are confronted by challenging behavior. You can easily make your own A-B-C sheet on a piece of blank paper by simply dividing it into three sections; one each for the Antecedents (before), the Behavior (during) and the Consequences (after). Remember that the more A-B-C data you have, the easier it is to identify patterns in the antecedents and consequences!

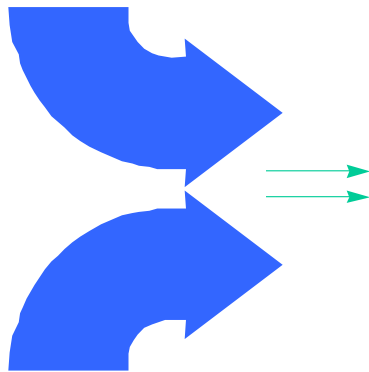
## **Your Notes**

## Information Brief

# The Scatter Plot

**The Scatter Plot is a simple and easy to use assessment tool that helps identify patterns that show when behaviors are more and less likely to happen over time.** It is used to chart one or more behaviors by checking the box under the day and time whenever the behavior(s) happen. DSP's, family members, day program and school staff can record this data as a team to show when the behavior happens in different environments.

Data should be recorded for 3-4 weeks so that patterns can be identified. This tool should be used to identify when the behavior(s) are most and least likely to happen. You can notice this by looking at what days and times the checks (or "X's") are on the plot, and where they are absent.



## Your Notes

## Other Uses of the Scatter Plot

### **Self Monitoring**

It can also be very helpful to teach someone you support to monitor their own behavior. By using the checks, and individual can see how they are doing right away. In other words, someone could use it as a self reminder instead of needing a staff person to tell them.

### **Charting Positive Behaviors**

Another way to use this tool is to chart positive behaviors like task completion, communication, completing homework, using the bathroom/toilet (instead of going in your pants), etc. It is very important to find out about when positive behaviors are more or less likely to happen. This helps us to focus on the POSITIVE instead of just charting negative or challenging behaviors.

## **Your Notes**

## Information Brief

# Behavior Motivations

## Your Notes

We all have basic needs as human beings. Behaviors are strategies that we use to communicate our wants, needs and feelings and to get our needs met in these areas. What motivates us to behave in certain ways? Although there are thousands of reasons why people behave the way they do, for the purpose of this exercise we will group our motivations into four general areas. We will use the following definitions as the four basic reasons why behaviors happen:

### **Sensory**

These are internal reasons for why a behavior happens. Personal enjoyment, stimulation and pleasure, or even pain, medical issues, mental illness, neurological issues (like seizures), etc., can be sensory reasons that cause behaviors to happen.

### **Examples:**

Drinking coffee, eating chocolate, bungee jumping, snow boarding, doing something nice for someone, the feeling we get when we teach someone a new skill, etc.

### **Escape**

Some behaviors help a person to escape or avoid things that they don't like (such as certain activities, jobs, people, places, etc.).

### **Examples:**

Procrastinating (putting things off), daydreaming during this class, etc.

**Your Notes****Attention**

Sometimes people engage in behaviors to be noticed or to get attention from certain people (either one or more specific individuals, or from the whole group of people who are around to give attention).

**Examples:**

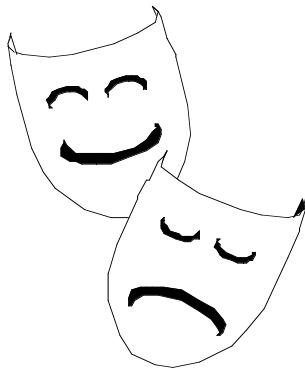
Starting a conversation, whining, pouting, interrupting, etc.

**Tangible Consequences**

People use behaviors for Tangible reasons in order to “get” something they desire; such as a favorite toy, object, food, token, money, a paycheck, favorite activity or game, etc.

**Example:**

Working at our jobs is an appropriate behavior that we use in order to earn a paycheck.

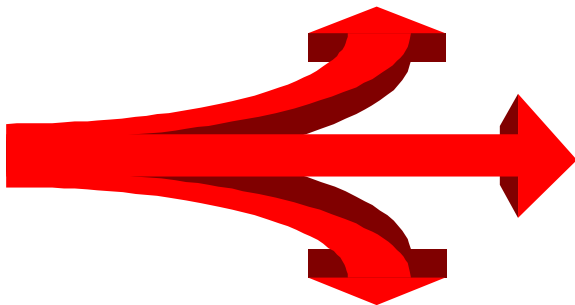


## Information Brief

# Functional Assessment

All behavior has meaning and is serving a need for the person. Behaviors are simply strategies that people use to express their wants, needs and feelings. We need to do some detective work to find out the function (or purpose) of challenging behavior. We call this process functional assessment. Once we have a better understanding of why the behavior is occurring, we can identify and teach some appropriate replacement skills as an alternative to the challenging behavior.

Things we can find out about  
WHY the behavior happens.



## Your Notes

## Key Word Dictionary

### Positive Behavior Support

### Session #5

#### **A-B-C data**

The recording of Antecedents (A), the Behavior (B), and the Consequences (C) when a challenging behavior happens. By writing down this information each time a challenging behavior happens, it is easier to identify Antecedents and Consequences that happen most often before and after the behavior. You can record A-B-C data on a sheet of paper by making 3 sections (one each for Antecedents, Behavior and Consequences).

#### **Antecedent**

The things that happen BEFORE the behavior, like what time it was, where the behavior took place, what activity was happening, and who was around. We want to identify antecedents that happen before a certain behavior so that we can understand when, where, with whom and during what activities the behavior will be more and less likely to happen.

#### **Behavior Function**

The function (or meaning) of a behavior is what the person is getting or avoiding through their behavior. For example; "An individual yells in order to be sent to his room and avoid doing the dishes."

#### **Behavior Triggers**

Triggers are the things that will usually "set a behavior off." A trigger can be a place, person, thing, or activity.

#### **Consequence**

The things that happen immediately after the behavior, like reactions or attention from people, getting something (like food, candy, toys, or other objects), being removed from an activity or place, and other things that people may say or do. We want to identify the consequences that usually happen after a challenging behavior, because there is a good chance that these consequences are reinforcing (making it more likely to happen again).

#### **Replacement Behavior**

The new skills and behaviors that we want to teach the person as an alternative to the challenging behavior.

### If You Want to Read More About Positive Behavior Support

**The Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions;** PRO-ED, Inc.  
(800) 897-3202; Web site: [www.proedinc.com](http://www.proedinc.com)

This journal includes articles that deal exclusively with Positive Behavior Support and Teaching Strategies for individuals with challenging behaviors. The articles include practical information that can be used by Direct Support Staff, family members and teachers.

**O'Neill, R., Horner, R., Albin, R., Storey, K., and Sprague, J. (1997).**  
Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: a practical handbook, Pacific Grove, Brooks/Cole Publishing. You can reach Brooks/Cole Publishing at (800)-354-9706.

This handbook is an easy-to-read manual which contains a variety of Functional Assessment tools and formats of Positive Intervention (Support) Plans. It is a “how-to” guide which goes through the process of how to assess behavior and develop a support plan. This is a great tool for anyone who will be developing support plans for individuals with a history of behavior challenges.



# Worksheets and Activities

## Resource Guide

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### **ANTECEDENT**

*What happens **BEFORE** the behavior*

Time of day, place or who is around, what is happening, etc.

### **BEHAVIOR**

*What happens*

***DURING** the behavior*

What happened -

Describe the behavior

### **CONSEQUENCE**

*What happens **AFTER** the behavior*

What was the response from peers and the environment; what did others say or do; other consequences

## Scatter Plot Activity

### Kevin's Data

**Directions:** Review the 2 weeks of data below, and, using the scatter plot on the next page, mark an " X " for every time that Kevin screamed or cussed, under the appropriate time and date. When you are finished, compare Kevin's daily schedule to the patterns you see on the Scatter Plot.

**When is Kevin more and less likely to scream or cuss, and why?**

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Time:</u>	<u>Activity/Behavior:</u>
9/5	6:31 am	Screamed
	6:35 am	Screamed
	3:20 pm	Cussed for 5 minutes
	6:50 pm	Screamed and cussed
9/6	6:35 am	Screamed
9/7	6:40 am	Screamed
	3:25 pm	Cussed for 5 minutes
	7:10 pm	Cussed and screamed
9/8	6:35 am	Screamed
	3:29 pm	Cussed for 10 minutes
	7:45 pm	Screamed and cussed
9/9	6:33 am	Screamed
	3:25 pm	Cussed
	7:05 pm	Screamed and cussed
9/12	6:32 am	Screamed
	3:25 pm	Cussed for 5 minutes
	6:35 pm	Screamed
9/13	6:32 am	Screamed
9/14	6:32 am	Screamed
	3:31 pm	Cussed
	6:44 pm	Screamed and cussed
9/15	6:31 am	Screamed and Yelled
	3:32 pm	Cussed
	7:45 pm	Scream and cussed
9/16	6:34 am	Screamed
	3:25 pm	Cussed
	7:20 pm	Scream and cussed

## Resource Guide

### Scatter Plot

Name: Kevin S.

Month/year: September

Behavior Definition: Screaming and/or cussing at each other

**\*\* Weekends occurred on the 3rd-4th, 10th-11th, 17th-18th, 24-25th\*\***

	Behavior did NOT occur										X Behavior DID occur										Behavior occurred 3x or more										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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## Scatter Plot Activity

### Kevin's Daily Schedule

<u>Time:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>DSP:</u>
6:30 am	Wake up housemates	Sally
7:00-8:00 am	Breakfast and a.m. routine	Sally
8:00 am	Take transit bus to work	
9:00-1:30 pm	Work at Home Depot job	Job coach
2:30 pm	Arrive home on transit bus	Jon
3:00-3:30 pm	Other housemates arrive home	Jon and Dan
3:30-5:00 pm	Home Chores	Jon
5:00-6:00 pm	"Free-time"	Dan
6:00-7:00 pm	Dinner	Jon and Dan
7:00-9:00 pm (M,W,Th,F)	Board games/social time with other housemates	Jon and Dan
7:00-9:30 pm (Tuesdays)	Community Outing	Jon
9:30-11:00	Relax/video games, etc.	Dan

**Weekends (Sat/Sun):**

Kevin and other housemates sleep in and go on community outings both days of the weekend.

## A-B-C Worksheet: Find the Behavior Triggers

**Directions:** In small groups, read and discuss the following stories. Circle the possible antecedents (what happened before the behavior) that may be acting as a “trigger.”

**Time:** 9:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Ramon’s room  
**Behavior:** Scream/yell  
**Incident:** Ramon’s roommate was watching “Jeopardy” on television in their room. Ramon told his roommate that he wanted to watch wrestling instead. His roommate said “No”. Ramon started to scream and yell profanities at his roommate. Staff came in to the room and asked Ramon what was going on. Ramon said he wanted to watch wrestling. Staff told Ramon he could watch wrestling on the television in the living room. Ramon stopped screaming and watched wrestling in the living room.

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Loretta’s room  
**Behavior:** Bite self/scream  
**Incident:** Loretta was sitting in her room listening to the radio. Staff came in and said “Loretta, you need to do the dishes now.” Loretta started to bite her arm and scream. Staff asked Loretta to take deep breaths until she calmed down.

**Time:** 7:30 a.m. Breakfast  
**Location:** Kitchen  
**Behavior:** Running and bumping into others  
**Incident:** At 7:30 in the morning, Sam ran from his room, bumping into one of his housemates and knocking down another on his way to the kitchen table, where breakfast was being served. Sam was told not to run in the house.

**Time:** 1:30 p.m.  
**Location:** At the Mall  
**Behavior:** Throwing lunch pail  
**Incident:** The DSP was supporting 4 people on a shopping trip to the mall. The DSP said “It’s time to leave and go to the bus stop”. Jose threw his lunch pail across the store. Staff helped Jose to pick it up and then they left the store.

## Behavior Motivations (Behaviors we use to get our needs met)

**Directions:** Please list some behaviors that YOU use to get your needs met in each of the following areas.

**Sensory behaviors:**

**Escape behaviors:**

**Attention seeking behaviors:**

**Behaviors to get Tangible Consequences:**

It is NORMAL for us to do things (to behave in certain ways) in order to get our basic needs met. It's HOW we go about getting these needs met that becomes the real issue. In other words, the behaviors that we use to get our needs met are what is important. We learn the "time and place" to use certain behaviors; and we learn socially "appropriate" ways to get our needs met, instead of using behaviors that will annoy people, lead to job termination, losing friends, getting suspended from school, etc.

## Functional Assessment Strategies

<b><u>ANTECEDENT</u></b> <i><b>What happens BEFORE the behavior</b></i>	<b><u>BEHAVIOR</u></b> <i><b>What happened DURING</b></i>	<b><u>CONSEQUENCE</u></b> <i><b>What happened AFTER</b></i>
<p><u>Things we can find out:</u></p> <p>Identify <b>behavior triggers</b> or what sets off the behavior?</p> <p><b>When</b> is it more and less likely to occur?</p> <p><b>Where</b> is it more and less likely to occur?</p> <p><b>What activities</b> are most and least likely to promote the behavior?</p> <p>What do people <b>do or say</b> that leads to a behavior?</p> <p>How does the person <b>learn best</b>?</p> <p>Who are his or her <b>friends</b>?</p>	<p><u>Things we can find out:</u></p> <p>What does the behavior look like?</p> <p>How often does it happen?</p> <p>How long does it last?</p> <p>What is the meaning of this behavior?</p> <p>Are medications or medical factors influencing the behavior?</p> <p>Pay attention to decreases in or absence of typical behaviors.</p>	<p><u>Things we can find out:</u></p> <p>What is the pay-off for the challenging behavior? (All challenging behavior is getting reinforced by something!)</p> <p>What is the behavior “saying” to us?</p> <p>What is the person “getting” or “avoiding” through the behavior?</p> <p>What reinforcers are available to the person every day? (People, places, activities and things that the person enjoys).</p>



## A-B-C Activity: Identifying Possible Consequences for Challenging Behaviors

**Directions:** In small groups, read and discuss the following stories. Circle the possible consequences (what happened after) that may be maintaining or reinforcing the challenging behavior.

**Time:** 6:30 PM  
**Location:** Living Room  
**Behavior:** Making farting noises  
**Incident:** Geoff finished eating his dinner and sat in the living room. When his roommate walked by, Geoff made loud farting noises. His roommate said "Geoff's making farting noises!". When staff walked in, Geoff made more farting noises. Staff said "Geoff, knock it off!". Five minutes later, Geoff made more farting noises. His roommate yelled "Geoff's doing it again!".

**Time:** 2:00 PM Sunday  
**Location:** Living Room  
**Behavior:** Interrupting and refusing to discuss choices she doesn't like.  
**Incident:** Three roommates were deciding on the weekly menu in order to plan the shopping and cooking schedules. Two of them suggested spaghetti for Tuesday. Crystal loudly said, "No way, we are having fish and chips!" One roommate quietly said, "But..." and Crystal interrupted loudly, "That is the way it is going to be!" The other two roommates both said okay softly.

**Time:** 4:00 PM  
**Location:** Van driving to store  
**Behavior:** Hitting window with fist.  
**Incident:** Pat is in the van with staff driving to the store. The staff was talking to another person in the van. Pat began waving and gesturing at the radio. The staff ignored her. Pat began to hit the van window with her fist. The staff said "O.K., Pam; I'll turn the radio on" and turned the radio on. Pam calmed down.

**Time:** 5:30 PM  
**Location:** Family Room  
**Behavior:** Hitting others  
**Incident:** Sally was playing with a hand held video game. Staff asked her to turn the game off and set the table. Sally continued to play. Staff went to Sally and asked her again to turn the game off. Sally hit the staff on the arm. Staff left Sally alone until she calmed down.

# Espen's Communication Dictionary

<b><u>When Espen . . .</u></b>	<b><u>It may mean . . .</u></b>	<b><u>What we should do . . .</u></b>
Slaps his hand against his leg or thigh	No Not right now I don't want to do this	Acknowledge him by saying "Espen, I know you don't want to do this now, but we need to get it done today." Give him a few alternate times when he can finish the activity.
Bites his hand gently	Or it may mean: He is watching TV now or His favorite TV show is one  He is getting frustrated or worried and anxious"	Acknowledge him by saying "I know you're watching TV now. Would you like to finish watching this show and then do this?"  Ask him to relax and take a deep breath. Ask him to show you what he wants, or give him a short break.
Bites his hand hard Screams	"I am getting frustrated" or "You're not listening to me!"	Ask him to relax; ask him to show you what he wants. Give him some space if possible.

## Behavior Communication Chart for Espen

### **When Espen...**

### **It may mean...**

**Whines (“mmmmmm”)**

**“Don’t interrupt me;  
I’m watching the game”**

**-or-**

**“I don’t want to do that now”**

**Slaps his leg, louder  
whining (“mmmmmm”)**

**“You’re not listening to me!”  
“I don’t want to do that right  
now!”**

**Bites his hand; screams**

**“You’re still not listening to me!”  
“Get out my way; now you’re  
really bothering me!”**

**Bites hand harder, screams  
louder. Chases DSP from  
room.**

**“You’re making me mad!”  
“Why aren’t you respecting me?”**



(Split up into groups of 3 to 4 people, and answer the following questions as a Team. Then, share your Team's answers with the larger group)

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## Optional Activity: Positive Behavior Support Outline

### Part 1- Functional Assessment Information

1. **Provide a brief description of an individual you know** (age, hobbies, good qualities), **living situation** (facility type, roommate situation), **school, work, day program** (type of classroom, day program, supported employment and supports) **typical community experiences** (activities outside the home):
2. **Describe a challenging behavior(s)** in observable and measurable terms.
3. **List the assessment tools that you used** to identify patterns in the challenging behavior across different environments. (Scatter plot, A-B-C, Motivation Assessment Scale, progress notes, etc.).
4. Answer the following questions about the challenging behavior:

**When most likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When least likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where most likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where least likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**With whom most likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**With whom least likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What activities most likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What activities least likely:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequences maintaining behavior:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical/medication influences:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **What do you think that the function (meaning) of the behavior is?** What is the person either getting, avoiding or saying through their behavior?

**What Do You Think the Challenging Behavior is Communicating?**

